**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT**

**OF**

**TRANSPORTATION**



**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

**RFQ-2016**

**HEARTLAND FLYER INTERCITY**

**PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

**RELEASE DATE: June 1, 2016**

Qualifications Due Date and Time

June 22, 2016 @ 12:00 PM Noon (Central Time)

The RFQ Coordinator is the SOLE POINT OF CONTACT. All communication between Responders and ODOT shall be with the RFQ Coordinator.

John Rosacker, Coordinator

Phone: 405-521-4164

jrosacker@odot.org

**I. Introduction**

The purpose of this announcement is to gather Qualifications from providers of rail services about service delivery options to provide more convenient, rapid, and reliable intercity passenger rail service between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Ft. Worth/Dallas, Texas. These submittals are not responses to deliver the service but will be used to identify potential efficiency improvements to the Heartland Flyer Intercity Passenger Rail Service.

**II. Statement of Need**

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) currently contract with Amtrak to provide an intercity passenger rail service that customers value with clean, safe, reliable travel; and comfort and convenience, including amenities such as Wi-Fi and food and beverage service. At the same time, rising costs and increasing budget constraints require ODOT and TXDOT to minimize the financial impact to the states while continuing to achieve transportation goals. The states are seeking opportunities for cost reduction and developing priorities based on creating the best value relative to the resources required in a manner that will:

• Provide an efficient, safe, and cost-effective alternative to highway, bus, and air travel;

• Support future growth of intercity passenger rail service on the Heartland Flyer

Rail Corridor between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Ft. Worth/Dallas, Texas by increasing the frequency of service from two to a minimum of four trains per day;

• Operate an efficient, high-quality intercity passenger rail service that helps minimize the need for state subsidies;

* Provide flexibility for ODOT and TXDOT to manage service amenities and business costs;
* Be sensitive to community and environmental impacts;
* Integrate with local roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation networks.

**III. Background**

The Heartland Flyer commenced operations on June 14, 1999 between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Fort Worth, Texas. The train departs Oklahoma City at 8:25 a.m., arriving at Fort Worth mid-day. The train returns to Oklahoma City in the evening. The Heartland Flyer operates daily. The Heartland Flyer provides connection at Fort Worth to the Amtrak Texas Eagle.

TXDOT became a co-sponsor of the Heartland Flyer in 2006. Because of the significant changes from the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), ODOT and TXDOT are working to pool resources for increased efficiencies and reduced costs in order to manage the most immediate challenges in this RFQ.

Qualifications Requested – Service Operations and Options

**See Exhibit A for a full description.**

ODOT and TXDOT are requesting Qualifications from providers of rail services, including, but not limited to train crews, rolling stock, train maintenance, on-board food and beverage, ticketing, and support personnel for the operation of passenger trains that could provide services for the Heartland Flyer Intercity Passenger Rail Service. Ability to work with the Class I railroads that are owners of the infrastructure that hosts intercity passenger rail service is a requirement. Safe, reliable, on-time services are corridor priorities.

**IV. Request for Qualifications Process**

After a review of the RFQ responses and assessment of the marketplace, the ODOT and TXDOT may or may not choose to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP). Participation in the RFQ process is a requirement for any subsequent competitive procurement, although the results of this RFQ may be used to build and refine an RFP. ODOT and TXDOT reserves the right to refrain from issuing an RFP or any other formal solicitation document for this product. This RFQ is not a formal solicitation and no contract will be awarded as a result.

**V. RFQ Schedule**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  Release RFQ |  Wednesday, June 1, 2016 |
|  Providers Questions Due by 12:00 p.m. noon (local time) |  Wednesday, June 8, 2016 |
|  Response to Providers Questions Due by 4:00 p.m. (local time) |  Monday, June 13, 2016 |

 Providers Submissions Due by 12:00 p.m. noon

 (local time) Wednesday, June 22, 2016

**VI. RFQ Coordinator**

Provider communications concerning this RFQ should be directed to the RFQ

Coordinator listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  RFQ Coordinator |  John Rosacker |
|  Address |  Oklahoma State Department of Transportation Rail Programs 200 N.E. 21st Street Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3204 |
|  Phone |  (405) 521-4164 |
|  E-mail |  jrosacker@odot.org |

**VII. Response Preparation Instructions**

ODOT and TXDOT requests that providers respond with formatting provided in Exhibit A—

Providers Response and any preprinted materials that would provide the Qualifications requested.

Providers are to respond in an electronic format such as Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Word. All communications must reference the RFQ acquisition number RFQ-2016 in the subject or title area.

Responses to this RFQ should be submitted to the RFQ Coordinator no later than 12:00 p.m. noon (local time) on April 30, 2016. Please do not cut and paste your responses into this RFQ. Instead, provide your response on Exhibit A and any separate documents or materials. Include numbers referencing the RFQ section to which you are responding. Only one electronic copy need be submitted. The RFQ Coordinator may email an acknowledgement of receipt to the submitting Providers.

**VIII. Cost of Response Preparation**

Providers will not be reimbursed for any costs associated with preparing or presenting any response to this RFQ.

**IX. Response Property of ODOT and TXDOT**

All materials submitted in response to this RFQ will become the property of ODOT and TXDOT. ODOT and TXDOT have the right to use any of the ideas presented in any respond to the RFQ. Selection or rejection of a response does not affect this right.

**X. Public Records and Proprietary Qualifications**

Any Qualifications contained in the response that are proprietary or confidential must be clearly designated. Marking of the entire submission as proprietary or confidential will be rejected as non-responsive.

ODOT is subject to 51 O.S. Section 24A-1 et seq. concerning open records requests made by the public. If a request is made to view Provider’s Qualifications, ODOT will follow the statue.

Information received by TXDOT becomes subject to the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code (the “Act”).  The Act allows the public to have access to information in the possession of a governmental body through an open records request, unless the information falls under one of the Act’s exceptions to required disclosure.  If a person submits an open records request to TXDOT seeking disclosure of information received through this RFQ, TXDOT will follow the procedures set forth in the Act.

ODOT and TXDOT’s sole responsibility shall be limited to maintaining the above data in a secure area and to notify Providers of any request(s) for disclosure for so long as ODOT and TXDOT retain Provider’s Qualifications in ODOT and TXDOT records per state law. Failure to so label such materials or failure to timely respond after notice of request for public disclosure has been given shall be deemed a waiver by Providers of any claim that such materials are exempt from disclosure.

**XI. Providers Comments and Questions**

Providers may submit comments and questions to the RFQ Coordinator prior to responding to the RFQ by the date indicated in the RFQ schedule in Section IV. Responses to provider questions will be considered addendums to the RFQ. Modifications to the RFQ that may result from Providers comments will be sent to all Providers. Where there appears to be a conflict between the RFQ and any amendment or addenda issued, the last amendment or addendum issued will prevail.

**XII. Selection of Providers**

At its sole discretion, ODOT and TXDOT will select providers to meet with based on materials and Qualifications provided. Providers will be notified by mail whether they have or have not been selected to discuss Qualifications provided. Be aware that no contract will be issued from any Qualifications provided as part of this Request for Qualifications.

**Exhibit A**

Qualifications Request – Service Operations and Options

The effort to introduce competition into existing intercity passenger rail corridors will confront serious challenges. ODOT AND TXDOT are interested in receiving expert opinion from interested providers of passenger train services and other stakeholders on strategies for managing costs and improving service. These include, but are not limited to, liability coverage and insurance arrangements; negotiations on access to freight owned track; managing labor relations in a fair manner; the smooth transfer of equipment and facilities and minimal qualifications for intercity passenger corridor operators; increasing train service from two trains per day to four trains per day. The team is also interested in general opinion and comment on best practice guidelines and standards for a modern procurement model for intercity corridor passenger services that will move the process in a manner that is efficient, fair, and cost effective for all parties.

ODOT and TXDOT are interested in receiving Qualifications from providers of rail services, including, but not limited to: train crews, train maintenance, on-board food and beverage, ticketing, and support personnel for the operation of passenger trains that could operate or provide some types of services for the Heartland Flyer Intercity Passenger Rail Service. Ability to work with the Class I railroads that are owners of the infrastructure that hosts intercity passenger rail service is a requirement. Safe, reliable, on-time services are corridor goals.

Rail providers with ideas about efficiency improvements and cost reductions are encouraged to submit a brief letter of interest, up to 5 pages, that addresses the following:

* A brief background of the firm and areas of expertise. Specify whether the firm is currently a provider of rail service.
* Recommendations with discussion about anticipated feasibility for state supported service.